

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"WHATEVER DOTH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT."—Paul.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

Contributed by "M.A. (Oxon.)"

There are some points in Mr. C. C. Massey's thoughtful and philosophical paper on "The Application to Spiritualism of Scientific Research" that it seems to me desirable to emphasise. His views are so sound, the expression of them so opportune, the application of them so important, that I hope I may be forgiven if I direct attention to them in this place. First of all, we have been accustomed to boast that anyone who will take the pains can verify the objective facts of Spiritualism for himself. Mr. Massey doubts this: so do I. It becomes increasingly apparent that the number of those who both can and will verify these facts is not large, certainly not inclusive of the whole intelligent portion of the human race. Dr. W. B. Carpenter used to say that many minds of ability and power had "no niche into which these facts would fit." Mr. C. C. Massey in another way sets forth what he believes to be the mental attitude "of the large majority of mankind." (1) A "mere want of interest . . . in evidence of this character, and even in the questions to which it relates." (2) A dissatisfaction with the validity of evidence as proof which would unquestionably suffice on other matters, a persistent demand for personal experience, originating chiefly "in the general atmosphere of incredulity which infects individuals contrary to their reason." I have myself long since put the same thought in another way. These new and startling phenomena do not impress the ordinary mind in the same way as facts that are correlated with previous experience which has been assimilated and has become the owner's mental property because they are new, isolated, *bizarre*, contrary to antecedent experience, not hooking on to or linked with a previous chain of experience of which they naturally form a part. I remember when, in 1878, Mr. Massey himself proposed to circulate my *Psychography* with a view to impressing a compact bit of evidence for one phenomenon on minds that might be deemed suitable and influential, I expressed my grave doubt as to the wisdom and use of any such proceeding. Acting on the same belief I have never voluntarily introduced the subject of Spiritualism to any one, though I have been willing to answer any questions in my power when a correspondent shows sufficient interest to seek for information. "Knock and it shall be opened unto you" is a good principle to act on. I believe that those who will be nourished spiritually by a knowledge of Spiritualism will knock, and gain what they need. But they are a small proportion of mankind.

Mr. C. C. Massey's second point to which I wish to advert, is the necessity that "investigators should not work

without any hypothesis"; that they should have conceptions adapted to the phenomena they are investigating. Yet how many pride themselves on having no antecedent ideas, only an open mind! That (be it said in passing) they have not, and cannot have; they are adapting "presumptions which are indisputably valid for ordinary experience to experience in a new field." This thought, which seems almost obvious when thus stated, is in reality at the root of failure in many cases. Men, especially men of a dogmatic scientific type, come to the study of this new science with a predetermination to prescribe their own conditions of investigation. When I first began the study of Spiritualism, a clerical friend of mine, who had asked for some information, was much exercised over the necessity for a medium. "We must have no medium," he said; "they are only a new kind of priest!" Poor man! He had made priestcraft a sort of boggy, and found it everywhere. Galileo's telescope once more. Medium of course we must have; but I agree with Mr. Massey that we have too exclusively concentrated our attention upon him. It is now many years ago, and I am not able to find any record of the speech, but I remember telling Spiritualists at one of the discussion meetings of the British National Association of Spiritualists that they were ignoring the powers of the incarnate human spirit, and fixing too exclusive an attention on the spirits of the departed as agents; that they thought too much of the medium and too little of the circle as factors in the evolution of phenomena. It is of good augury that attention should be directed to this fact; for, as Mr. Massey points out, the air of cold mistrust, suspicion, and even of prickly criticism, which investigators of a certain type bring with them, is absolutely fatal to success in the investigation on which they have embarked. We have heard, till we are tired of hearing, that success depends largely on the comfortable mental and physical state of the medium: but the statement is true and needs repeating. Very few natures are so crass, very few persons have so developed psychical power, as to be able to face with impunity a "committee" that sets out with an ostentatious disbelief of all antecedent evidence in favour of the medium, and an expressed determination to prevent him from playing any of his tricks on *them*. The fact is that the medium is only one factor in the proceedings: and such a circle brings with it conditions of its own that make success in the highest degree improbable, if not impossible. The professional medium, no doubt, is to a great extent hardened, and hence it has come to pass that superficial people think that all depends on him, and that if he succeeds with a given six persons, he ought to succeed with any other six. But this is not the case: and already the application of these rigid scientific methods is proving as fatal to the very existence of public mediums as the abolition of cabinets was to the existence of fraud and imposture.

And this brings me to another of Mr. Massey's points. "There is" (he writes) "a single fixed and dominant idea that scientific research in this province means the elimination of fraud and nothing more." That is very true. "It

is all one mass of fraud, and we must apply the scientific method of investigation, and expose it," is the one cry of scientific persons, who have a voracious appetite for what they call facts, and who use them for purposes of dissection with a view to "exposure" of fraud, which they seem always to assume to be present. On this point Mr. Massey's observations are most valuable. I take leave to quote a portion of them:—

"If we are Spiritualists in any philosophical sense, we shall always seek the causes of material and historical phenomena in the spiritual, not degrading spiritual and intellectual progress by attributing it ultimately to anything whatever that is outward and phenomenal. Rather shall we refuse to see in the latter any original basis of belief, recognising only its conformity to principles of intelligence. He would of course be a foolish, or rather crazy, idealist who should deny the value of observation, of experiment, of research, in contact with our external world. But we shall maintain the order of knowledge to be hypothesis first, and then verification, nor shall we expect to find the unity of reason in the empirical manifold unless it is first conscious in ourselves, though the consciousness may be indeterminate and wavering, needing fixation, elucidation, and definition in the object. We are false to the principle of Spiritualism if we expect the latter to prevail by any action of its objective evidences upon the unprepared intelligence of mankind. So far from importuning an incredulous world with our facts, we should rather avoid leaning too heavily on them ourselves. Not that our interest in them need diminish, but because we should understand the present phase to be transitory, to be introductory to something better and more effective.

"Anticipations of the development of phenomenal Spiritualism have sometimes taken the form of predictions of unparalleled marvels by which the world should be compulsorily convinced. I think I remember reading long ago a trance address in which we were told that in a year or two materialised forms of well-known deceased citizens would be walking down Regent-street or Broadway. That sort of thing well represents the misconception that facts are bludgeons by which truth can be dashed into the human brain. If one fact is not stout enough for this purpose, we try, or imagine, another."

Facts alone, even repeated until the accumulation is as vast as the Society for Psychical Research desires, will never be of any greater service to us than such accumulation as we now have at our command. "They are not received because they are not understood. The function of evidence is not to create understanding, but to verify it. Let us seek then first the form of intelligence, and its matter shall be added to us." In so writing I am very far from undervaluing the importance of accurate and precise records of carefully observed phenomena. If I could prevail on the readers of "LIGHT," and as Mr. F. W. H. Myers once more asks for in his letter published in another column, to send to its columns such records as I have described I should feel that I had done a good work. But they must be submitted to criticism other than that which shall scan them only to detect a lurking fallacy or fraud, or which shall dismiss them as worthless because some unproven allegation was once made against the medium through whom the phenomena have occurred. This "impotent *bêtise*," as Mr. C. C. Massey describes the notion that truth can be knocked into every man's head with the bludgeon of fact, must give way before a truer conception. The mind must be prepared: and it is precisely this organic preparation that has made the actual extension of Spiritualism possible; in other words we have been able to recognise in external facts the verification of an internal sense. We have known that these phenomena come by cycles, with a certain ebb and flow as spirit influence manifests itself. "If this be so, we should find the hope of widespread recognition of the spiritual rather in the unseen development of this influence than in misapplications of scientific methods of research, or in the functions of uninformed judgment in relation to external evidence."*

* Here I may direct the attention of those who do not know the essay to Mr. Massey's "Value of Testimony in Matters Extraordinary," originally read before the Psychological Society of Great Britain, published in the *Spiritualist* of June 14th, 1878, and reprinted as an Appendix to Mr. Massey's translation of Zöllner's *Transcendental Physics*. It should be read in connection with the paper on which I am now commenting.

The causes which conduce to the development in the present age of latent psychical faculties in mankind are so well put that I once more quote, in order to fix attention on words that may have escaped notice:—

"Now the conditions of modern life are beyond all precedent favourable to *this* elicitation of hidden and unsuspected faculties, however little favourable to those higher forms of experimentation which I shall have to touch upon before concluding. The social intercourse which brings the subject so frequently into discussion, and excites eager curiosity in every quarter where predisposition exists; the newspaper Press, which by an amusing fatality is unable to let the subject alone, and by its very hostility and jeers is constantly awakening attention to it, and giving occasion for the communication of experiences at every dinner table and in every drawing-room; the novelists, who are emulously working the rich vein of psychical and ghostly and magical fiction, as well representing as stimulating public interest, the facility and habit of travelling, increasing the chance of contact with the mystical side of life, popular education, which enlarges the area of information and resulting interest, in this as in every other subject; the growth of free-thought and decay of the repressive influence of authority; all these circumstances are eminently conducive to the acquisition and distribution of personal experience."

There never was, I should opine, at any time a more favourable period for this psychical development. Perhaps I shall be open to a charge of pessimism if I say there never was an age when such development was more risky, more positively dangerous. Mr. Massey points this out. "Spiritualism is a tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and there are many for whom the state of innocence is represented by materialism, individualism, and a religious formalism from which all the spirit is departed. . . . But much of the danger of mediumship—spirit-obsession and control—is probably a passing phase arising from the isolation of mediums, and will find its correction in the advancing discovery of the potent forces which can be educed by psychical association and unity." True, but meantime it would not be honest to refrain from pointing out that the development of psychical powers in our present state of ignorance, or at best of empirical knowledge, is fraught with grave risk; and that experimenting upon mediums imperfectly developed by men who approach such experimentation in a spirit such as that which has been adverted to is likely to lead to a species of psychical vivisection which Spiritualists would deplore and from which they would wholly dissociate themselves.

Mr. Massey's conclusions, important as they are, I have left myself little space to notice. From an account of the manifestations given to the Monks of the Charterhouse, as they awaited with resignation, and highly-strung devotion, the persecution that was coming upon them, he shows how this "tense harmony of the circle, this rhythmic energy of a great emotion and a common faith" produced, or at any rate conduced to, these phenomenal manifestations. This, in another way, is the cause why a circle of friends whose minds are attuned to communion with their loved and lost friends is the recipient of manifestations of spirit-power which a circle of experts (including one conjurer) will search for and expect in vain. But this by the way. The use of Spiritualism is not solely to soothe our wounded affections, smarting under an irreparable loss. The use of Spiritualism is not merely to convince an incredulous world that there is a future for man, in which he may expiate his sins. It is not exclusively an evidence of immortality, or a superior kind of moral police. It aims at more than this. It is educational in its effects, and its chief effects are interior. It is spiritually discerned, and is not fully or adequately represented by "phenomena." Get rid of that idea, and take a wider, nobler view. Mr. Massey shall put it in his own intuitive way, a fitting close to a most sagacious and intuitive paper, for which our thanks are eminently due.

"Thus we are no longer passive recipients of information about another world, and of domestic consolations as to which comparatively few of us are quite free from doubt, but we are at once face to face with ethical responsibilities, and with

potentialities, not only of self-development, but of the most beneficent action in the world. We come to understand what powerful forces the great law of sympathy places at our disposal, if only we will raise ourselves to the condition of *rapport*. And as soon as we associate Spiritualism with this idea, there is an immediate transition from our former view of it as evidential to one which will certainly limit the number of its adherents, but which, if faithfully carried out, will raise it to a tower of influence and strength. Scientific Spiritualism is necessarily practical, because the true object of experimentation is ourselves. The first condition of 'mediumship' is passivity. But in the higher development which is here anticipated that condition rises to the more or less complete passivity of egoism, of the individualism which separates, and is the loss of larger consciousness. So that the due preparation of 'circles' will transform them, in the first instance, into schools, and he only will be allowed to enter who consents to the cathartic discipline which opens the gate of the interior life. *Hic labor, hoc opus est*. I believe that the organisation of Spiritualism upon earth, if we have regard to its ideal tendency, is a great fact of the future, but it will not exist for the purpose of convincing the incredulous, but for the training of mankind."

HOW I INVESTIGATED SPIRITUALISM, AND WHAT I MADE OF IT.

By J. H. M.

PART I.

The circumstances under which the phenomena included under the name of Spiritualism came under my notice, necessitating some attention on my part, may be briefly stated.

My wife, without my knowledge, had been invited to, and had attended, one or two private sésances held at the residence of Mr. Ovendean, of Bywood. At these meetings she had witnessed manifestations that had excited both curiosity and interest, and which she was quite unable to explain. Availing herself of a favourable opportunity, she introduced the subject by informing me of her visits to Bywood, of the nature of her investigations, and the singular character of the phenomena witnessed. I could not resist an expression indicative of impatience, mixed with a certain indignation at what I considered the folly of her proceedings. Nevertheless, I found myself listening quietly to details of experiences on a subject for which all my life I had entertained supreme contempt, having regarded Spiritualism as an inheritance of ignorance, superstition, and fanaticism, and looked upon all Spiritualists as either fools or knaves. In a simple and natural manner my wife related the particulars of her experiences. True, they did not amount to very much, after all; only a dancing, tilting table, and half-a-dozen more or less meaningless messages, of by no means a high order of merit either in substance or expression. But there was this fact in connection with her story, that all the sitters were known to me, and their antecedents, characters, and social and intellectual standing were beyond question. The sésance, too, was in a private house, and that *bête noire* of bigotry and prejudice, the professional medium, was entirely absent. From her description of the phenomena, I came to the conclusion that under certain conditions, at present not understood, a table could be made to move, and, apparently, manifest intelligence, but that this intelligence would, on investigation, be found to be simply a reflection of the minds and thoughts of the sitters composing the circle. I very unwillingly acceded to the request of my wife to investigate the subject with her, my prejudices being partly disarmed, and my objections modified, by her expressed scepticism of the phenomena being in any way attributable to the action of disembodied spirits. I accordingly accompanied her to the next sésance at Bywood, and joined a circle of six persons in a dimly lighted room, seated around a circular drawing-room table. For my own part, I was sadly conscious of the absurdity of the whole proceeding, and mentally concocted satirical squibs for future use in exposing the Spiritualistic folly. Whoever, on the occasion of my visit, may have been responsible

for "assistance" I could not say, but certain it was that the table tilted in every direction, and, in response to the alphabet, spelt out names purporting to be those of deceased friends of the sitters, with brief messages of the "God bless you" order. "Certainly, very remarkable," I remarked to my wife on returning; "some subtle electrical influence; and as for the intelligence, no doubt it is in some way contributed by the sitters themselves."

After three or four visits to the circle at Bywood, I found myself sadly puzzled, owing to a growing conviction of the reality and *bona fide* nature of the phenomena. The effect was manifest enough, but the producing cause entirely evaded my scrutiny. Whatever it might, or might not be, to associate such mundane phenomena in any way with saints, angels, or demons, such as orthodoxy had pictured the denizens of the spirit world, was, I concluded, clearly ridiculous. Tilting tables *must* be unworthy of spiritual existence where all is sublime and beautiful. There was something degrading in the association, to a mind steeped in the orthodox conception of spirit life.

In this difficulty I held a council of war with my wife, with the result that, notwithstanding the absolute confidence we entertained of the integrity and good faith of our friends at Bywood, we concluded that it would be even more satisfactory could we witness the phenomena in our own home and in a circle composed exclusively of the members of our own family. A circle was accordingly formed at my house, consisting, to commence with, of my wife, my sons Roger and John, and myself. We held our first successful sésance on Sunday evening, February 3rd, 1884, and a very funny experience it was. Shortly after taking our seats a small round chess table, about eighteen inches in diameter, on which our hands were placed, commenced to move from side to side and rock violently. In order to ascertain that I was not unconsciously aiding its movements, I determined to exercise muscular effort to stay the motion. I found that although by this means I could retard and partially stop the tilting, yet the moment I allowed the table free play the rocking resumed. Unconscious muscular effort, either on my own part or on that of my wife and sons, I soon found to break down utterly as a theory to account for the movements. Five smart raps on the floor in succession by one of the three legs was the call for the alphabet, so we were all attention to see what manner of communications we were to receive. When one enters for the first time into conversation with a stranger, it is only natural that, lacking an introduction, we should wish to know with whom we are communicating. I therefore asked the unknown intelligence, or force, to be good enough to favour us with his name. In reply, the table spelt out deliberately, but most unmistakably, letter by letter, *Matthew Jenkins*.

Never before having had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Mr. Jenkins, nor personally knowing anyone of that name, I proceeded to put, through the table, a series of questions as to his antecedents, occupation, &c., and elicited information, all of which, whether true or false, was clearly and without effort or difficulty spelt out in reply to my questions. When on earth (Mr. Jenkins stated) he lived at Lowestoft, was by occupation a fishmonger, and died in the reign of Queen Anne. He did not remember his age at death; he was now in the third sphere (whatever that might be supposed to mean), and declared himself to be the appointed guide of my daughter Jane. I inquired of this singular force, or intelligence, purporting to be Mr. Jenkins, if he had enjoyed the privilege of making the acquaintance of any of my deceased relatives. To my great surprise the answer came distinctly, "Yes." Did he know them when on earth? "No." Had he met them in the spheres? "Yes." Not without some misgiving, I requested the name of one of the relatives in question with whom he

professed to be acquainted. The table responded *James Hales M——r.*

This was the name of my father, who died in 1877. Not knowing what to make of this, I asked the intelligence if he could bring my father to the circle, to which he replied in the affirmative. After the lapse of perhaps ten minutes the table commenced an entirely different motion of a rotary character, which has since become so familiar to us that we know instantly by its peculiarity the identity of the communicating intelligence. In response to our inquiry the table gave the name *James Hales M——r.* Asked if up to that time he had known of the possibility of communicating with those on earth, he replied, *No.* Asked to whom he was indebted for the information, the reply was (spelt out), *Matthew Jenkins.* Had he known that gentleman on earth? *No.* Had he made his acquaintance in the spirit world? *Yes.* Asked in what sphere he himself existed—*Second sphere.* Was grandmamma with him? *No.* Was he happy? Table hesitated considerably, then the answer came with force—*No.* Was he in pain? *No.* Was he suffering? *Yes.* Would he spell out the nature of his sufferings? *Remorse.* Asked if he could suggest some better method of communication, the reply was spelt out—*Pencil.* After further communications through the table, of too personal a character for reproduction even under assumed names, we broke up the sitting, having first inquired as to which member of the circle could be used for communicating by writing with pencil and paper, and receiving for reply the name of my son John.

Afterwards, in thinking the matter over, I concluded that the name of my father, being known to all the sitters, might very well have been extracted from the brain! But whence did the Jenkins factor come?

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

At the annual general meeting of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society, held at the Society's room, 15, York-street, Covent Garden, on the 27th of January, Mr. A. P. Sinnett, on his re-election as President of the Lodge, delivered the following address:—

The Theosophical Society has passed through many stormy trials in the past year or two, and we need not shrink from acknowledging that they have crippled and retarded our efforts to do a little good in the world. We of this Society constitute, as far as I am aware, the first body of students concerned with the investigation of Nature's more deeply hidden mysteries, who have sought to disseminate rather than to preserve for private use the treasures of knowledge that occult study brings to light. For our pains we have encountered—though in the milder form that befits our gentler age—some currents of narrow-minded persecution, resembling in spirit, though not in violence, those directed with much more intolerable force against earlier pioneers of enlightenment. The Society, however, has been little affected by this kind of opposition. Its growth, I am quite ready to admit, has been checked, but its solidity remains practically unimpaired. The reasons which account for this may usefully be passed in review, as we prepare this evening to enter on a new year of our corporate existence.

Of course, to begin with, no sensible person can have expected the undertaking in which this Society is engaged, to prove a holiday task. That undertaking is nothing less than the establishment of a nucleus of spiritual development around which the Wisdom-Religion of the future may crystallise. The curiosity and excitement which welcomed the first appearance of our ideas soon exhaled their insubstantial force. Misrepresentation and frivolous mockery supplanted them after a brief delay, but though impeding our usefulness, these weapons could only prove effective against the first faintly awakened sympathies of people who were but just beginning to take interest in our inquiries. To recede from an attitude of mind in which the general principles of Esoteric philosophy are once fairly grasped, is intellectually impossible. No man whose mind has been inundated with the spiritual revelation involved in an

appreciation of that philosophy can forego his hold upon the Esoteric theory of the soul's evolution,—upon the sublime reply which it provides for the tangled enigmas of life.

This is the explanation of a condition of things at which, I believe, our assailants are surprised. These have only occupied themselves with minor incidents on the surface of the Theosophic movement, and have entertained no suspicion concerning the depth of the current. They cannot make out why Theosophists should remain true to their principles when these are clearly calculated to provoke popular contempt and are no longer associated with the thrilling entertainment to be derived from thaumaturgic phenomena. The truth is that a Theosophic comprehension of our own nature conducts us past that turning point in evolution which may be regarded as the attainment by man, of his spiritual majority,—as the soul's coming of age. Previous to that period a man in his relations with the supreme powers of Nature is still in his spiritual nonage, no matter how highly cultivated his intelligence and how richly stored his mind may be. His aspirations may be creditable, his conduct admirable, and his periodic repose in the higher spheres of existence correspondingly enjoyable. Or his tastes may be entirely ignoble and his life degraded, and suffering may be provoked by the misdirected forces of ignorance. Still, moral responsibility in either case is relatively light for a human being who has not yet learned that he himself and no external authority is the appointed arbiter of his own spiritual destiny. It is only when the absolute truth of that view is borne in on his understanding with irresistible force by the self-sufficient assurances of that supreme science which still for awhile, till the world is better instructed, we must call occult, that a Theosophic student attains a position in Nature from which he can appreciate the stupendous possibilities attaching to the further progress of his own evolution. And with his rights over himself thus once realised, no man who has passed that turning point in his existence, would be willing, even if he were able, to get back behind it again. It is true that the enlightened Theosophist acquires augmented control over his own destinies for evil as well as for good. He may distinctly do himself more spiritual harm, if he so wills it, as a Theosophist, than as a relatively irresponsible unit of the great junior division of humanity. But, to take a humble analogy from worldly life, there are probably few young heirs to fortune who, on attaining the age of twenty-one, would desire to be once more in their minority for fear lest they should misuse their newly-acquired power. So with the attainment of spiritual majority, it is hardly conceivable that a human being once invested with it would wish to put it away from him. For every such person, to begin with, will be inclined to trust his own discretion thenceforward in preference to the forces previously controlling him, (which will look like blind chance in comparison); and secondly, it becomes unmistakably clear, in the light of occult philosophy, that a soul *must* sooner or later accept its spiritual coming of age—or die. For a plainly intelligible reason, moreover, it is better to accept it sooner than later. Say that a man, taking a glimpse of the possibility of knowing himself as a self-governing being, thinks the risk too great, and turns back to the attitude of mind from which he had almost emerged; say that he endeavours once more to luxuriate in the "comfortable" belief that he will somehow be made perfect and eternally blissful without himself taking any trouble in the matter, and without meanwhile surrendering the very transitory enjoyments of a highly imperfect state. The policy adopted by that man would merely, in the long run, augment the risks of his transition when at last—at some immensely distant period—he might perhaps come spiritually of age even in spite of himself, and realise then that he had no time left in which to reconquer his lost opportunities.

In spiritual progress, even more certainly than in practical business, it is a bad plan to get into the way of leaving undone to-day whatever looks as if it could be put off till to-morrow. The persistence of tendencies thus set up is apt to be disastrously powerful. And though, whenever a human being first emerges from the junior into the senior division of his race, the shock of the new experience is liable to prove startling, it is perfectly useless to shrink from it on that account. It will be more startling the longer it is put off. If our course of evolution took us first through a fishy state we should probably gasp on being introduced to the finer medium of the atmosphere, but it might be better to gasp than to drown, and the denser fluid would be death in the long run for the being who had developed lungs adapted to the breath of the higher life.

Of course it is not in the accomplishment of any one overt act, like joining this Society, for instance, that the great turning point in evolution of which I speak is definitely passed. For some persons, perhaps, the joining of this Society has been really the critical moment. I am glad to believe that it has been so, indeed, for many. But though it may be so recognised by many of us in looking back, a spiritual coming of age is not like the analogous achievement of physical life, an affair of an inevitable instant. In physical life the clock strikes twelve, and a legal metamorphosis is accomplished. The corresponding spiritual metamorphosis may be slowly wrought in the course of several years, and in looking back afterwards, the selection of any particular act or period as that which may be regarded as the turning point, would be almost an arbitrary choice. There may, on the other hand, be many people who join the Theosophical Society, and dabble for a time on the brink of the change to which it might introduce them if they so willed it, but who yet drift off again into other channels of life, and avoid doing to-day what they find it possible to put off till to-morrow. For them, most assuredly, there has been no magic associated with the overt act in question, such as it was, and though at all events they can be none the worse for such dabbling, it must be granted that they can hardly be very much the better.

And while the act of associating oneself with this movement may or may not be elevated into a step of real interior importance as each person determines for himself, we may freely recognise the principle that the great spiritual change of which I am speaking may be accomplished quite independently of the Theosophical Society. *Every* road, in spite of the proverb, may not lead to Rome, but at all events, a great many do. It is my settled conviction that the Theosophical Society is the most convenient road that people of this age and quarter of the world can choose if they want to travel the way of the higher life; but I have no doubt whatever that others, of which the world at large knows, if possible, less than it knows about the Theosophical Society, lead also in the same direction even from the midst of modern London.

The question whether any given path of thought or spiritual progress is truly a path leading to spiritual evolution, and not a *cul de sac* of mere misguided searching, might roughly be tested, I am inclined to think, by considering whether it recognises certain leading ideas of esoteric philosophy, no matter under what verbal disguise. The first such principle I take to be that "Man is man and master of his fate," in the fullest acceptation of those words. This principle, be it observed in passing, prejudices nothing concerning the nature of the Great First Cause of all things, concerning the supreme informing potency of Absolute Spirit, or, if that grouping of words be preferred, the attributes of God. Except at the level of the most childlike thinking, the supreme power of the universe operates on the visible manifestations of Nature, or of itself, through secondary causes, perhaps through causes coming at the end of series considerably longer than any that can be thought of as made up of two terms. So that among those which we may be content for the moment to call secondary causes, we may rank the individual will of any given man as a duly chartered and legalised force in the cosmos. And, as I say, the recognition of each such force as containing within itself the potentiality of becoming an evolutionary agency is clearly essential to any correct view of life and spiritual science. For that is merely the ultimate meaning of moral responsibility; and anyone who denies moral responsibility as a principle of Nature, however unintelligible he may think its operation to be, can hardly as yet be said to exercise reasoning faculties.

Secondly, it appears to me that no view of Nature can lead a man into sufficiently close relations with truth to take him up to the great turning-point of spiritual progress, unless it shows him that the manner in which moral responsibility works in humanity *must* include the frequent revolution of the soul, so to speak, through all the seasons of existence, of which the season of ploughing and sowing and hard toil of preparation—the season of physical life—is but one. There is no meaning in physical evolution, which is a patent fact of Nature before us—unless it is accompanied by that corresponding evolution of the soul, without which Nature would be without a final purpose, but the reality of which can only be felt as a truth when we perceive it carried out through successive returns to slowly improving forms, of the but too slowly improving soul. No sense can be made of the great hieroglyphic before us; no glimmering of justice can be discerned as operating in the moral government of the world; no

soul at all, indeed—by the time the argument is pushed to its extremity—can be recognised as inhering in the living human organism, without the help of the all-illuminating doctrine of re-incarnation. Without understanding this—subject, of course, to the limitations which point to an ultimate escape from the necessity or re-incarnation, and subject also to the reasonable rejection of much nonsense that has been encrusted round the doctrine by exoteric Eastern religions which have included without properly interpreting it—it is hardly possible to imagine a student of the great problems of existence on any path that can lead to their effective solution.

But we may grant to such a student in the fullest measure a comprehension of the leading principles here referred to and leave him still face to face with a congeries of spiritual and psychic mysteries no less fascinating than important. These mysteries may assuredly serve, through unfathomable vistas of time, to occupy the attention, and tax the most resolute investigations of the Theosophical Society, whether we regard that body from the point of view of its outermost fringe, or from that of its innermost nucleus. And the practical endlessness of its task affords us the best guarantee that can be desired of its continuous vitality; while its efforts to do good in the world by a gentle but persistent promulgation of the central and essential ideas of esoteric philosophy will always, we may be sure, be intimately blended with its own internal development. A widely ramifying occult law will be recognised as operating to render the progress of its most determined members dependent in no small degree on a simultaneous prosecution of their effort to widen the outer horizon of that area within which the elementary principles of esoteric teaching may, through their agency, be in process of taking root. Nor do I think this view of the situation incompatible with the primary declaration of the Theosophical Society,—that it is not the temple of any hard and fast creed, no new religion or hundred-and-first sect piled on the mass of those which antedated its formation. It may be, on the contrary, a free association of inquirers after truth, of students engaged, with perfect mutual toleration for each other's views, in exploring the mysteries of Nature,—but none the less, it is to be hoped that we shall not for ever confine ourselves to seeking without finding; and there are some fundamental conclusions which the great body of Theosophists may frankly accept as an inevitable outcome of any earnest endeavour to formulate a spiritual science.

The fact that most of us have arrived at these leading conclusions of which I speak, appears to me the true explanation of that condition of things which I set out to interpret—the cohesion of this Society, and its perseverance in carrying on its appointed task in spite of the various attacks—some due to honest blundering, some to perverse stupidity, some to private jealousy and malevolence—from which it has suffered so long. As a society, too much of our time has been inevitably spent upon combating such antagonism. But those who have, however reluctantly, worked hardest at this ungrateful task will be the most ready, I think, to admit that their interest in the esoteric movement, by which such activity has been promoted, has all the while carried them on across considerable spaces—if I may use that figure—of interior development; and perhaps the only attitude of mind which can incline any one once launched on Theosophical work to find it unproductive, is that which may induce any such person to shrink from bearing in disagreeable crises a reasonable share of the common burden. Inspired by this consideration, I hope the coming year may see us all resolved to show a more and more cheerful front to the great enemy we have to face—miscomprehension of our purpose, of our philosophy, and of the much calumniated pioneer of this undertaking, to whose devoted instrumentality its original inception is due—and to whom therefore, under sanction of our Karma, whatever spiritual advantage we have derived from it is, directly or indirectly, due also.

SOUTH LONDON SPIRITUAL INSTITUTE, WINCHESTER HALL, 33, HIGH-STREET, PECKHAM.—Mr. J. Veitch gave a very able lecture on Sunday, on "Spiritualism: Its Work." A number of strangers were present, who showed great interest in the address. Literature bearing on the subject was distributed at the close of the service. Next Sunday, at seven, Mr. J. Humphries will give an address. Subject: "God and Science." The Children's Lyceum was held at 2.30 p.m., with an attendance of thirty children and adults. We shall be glad of any help in this branch of the work.—W. E. LONG, Hon. Sec., 9, Pasley-road, Walworth.

OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"
16, CRAVEN STREET,
CHARING CROSS, W.C.

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Light:

Edited by "M.A. (OXON.," and E. DAWSON ROGERS.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12th, 1887.

SPIRITUALISM AND SCIENCE.

II.

It is difficult to see how an intelligent appreciation of the series of changes which succeed each other in the material world, and which we call the order of nature, can be the outcome of that series of changes. Yet unless this be so, there is no alternative but the acceptance of intelligence as something outside that series of changes, which something knows about the changes from its being thus outside them and independent of them.

The materialistic philosophy of the present day, however, asserts that "intelligence" is the result, in some not yet understood way, of the progressive action of matter on matter, and that the knowledge of things has somehow arisen out of the things themselves. It is, perhaps, not too much to say that the full significance of the proof or disproof of the truth of this assertion has not been generally realised. If the position cannot be maintained, and we hold that it cannot, then intelligence is at once allowed to be a thing independent of matter; whether attached to a body or not so attached is of no importance in the argument. If intelligence is independent as to its existence, the main doctrine of Spiritualistic belief is a necessary consequence.

The attitude of Science as regards "intelligence" is then at once understood. It must either show "intelligence" to be the result of material change, or it must admit its independent existence. Science asserts the former, Spiritualistic philosophy the latter.

Science, then, having taken up a position of active antagonism to all religious belief founded on the assumption of a real and spiritual world which is not this, is bound by that very antagonism, perhaps also by fear, to use all the means at its disposal to uphold its position. We say perhaps by fear, for the destruction of this supposed stronghold of materialism seems likely to lead to curious misgivings among the pleasant homes of scientific complacency. It is instructive to note how, even now, when hurling the shafts of ridicule, scientific people, and their legion of admirers, seem to have a hazy recollection, or indwelling idea, perhaps from some perverted and otherwise barren religious instinct, of a hope of better things to come. They cannot understand an active intelligence when separate from the body, though at the same time denying the existence of that intelligence, doing such foolish things as rapping a wall or turning a table; there is always a hope of a crown of some kind after all. To rap a wall or turn a table is such a ridiculous thing, so utterly degrading to a disembodied spirit!

But do such people know what is small and degrading with such an absolute knowledge as to smallness and degradation as to dare assert what is of itself small and degrading? The contemplation, by an unscientifically educated person, of a philosopher watching a pendulum, might not conduce to a lofty conception of the philosopher's character in that uneducated person's mind. A lump of brass swinging at the end of a rod is no more impressive than a table going round, even though the philosopher be watching it in the interest of universal gravitation. The unscientific person might think the philosopher mad, as the woman thought Newton mad when she saw him at his window, day after day, blowing soap-bubbles. Why should not the rap and the table-turning be the result of a complicated dynamic, the circularity of the table being one of those forms which most easily lend to that dynamic its opportunity of impinging on this state of existence? The constant recurrence of the tripod in oracular shrines indeed points to some such knowledge among the earlier men. But, then, science knows of no oracles except its own.

The danger that arises, when science attempts to deal finally with matters such as this, is finely expressed by Mr. F. W. Myers in his able and delightful essay on "Greek Oracles." He says: "What philosophical enlightenment was in the last century, Science, physical or historical, is in our own. Science is the power to which we make our first and undoubting appeal, and we run a corresponding risk of assuming that she can already solve problems wholly, which as yet she can solve only in part—of adopting under her supposed guidance explanations which may hereafter be seen to have the crudity and one-sidedness of Voltaire's treatment of Biblical history."

The risk is indeed great, but how enormously is the risk increased when Science enters with its arrogance and lofty pretension into the domains of those to whom this arrogance and pretension are as a sweet-smelling sacrifice, when, while denying the existence of these separate intelligences, it blindly staggers into their country. The "prince of the power of the air," the "dweller on the threshold" is ever ready to show the *ignis fatuus* light to such, and to beguile to their own destruction those who venture into these realms clad only in the panoply of presumption and conceit.

SPIRITUALISM AND PHILOSOPHY.

Philosophy is the Spiritualisation of Fact. A fact, or thing done, is, at best, but a phenomenon, and of small profit, except in so far as it is the expression of the law in which it originates. *Factum verbum est*, a thing done is a word spoken, and out of the combination of such we read the book or "bible," which records the laws of the universe. Thus, in Spiritualism, it is not the thing told, but the thing taught, which is deserving of regard; and, to those who study it, a lie may be as valuable as a truth. It is not the utterance, but the meaning, that is precious; and Spiritualism comes to instruct, not by words as to a child, but by experiences as to a man. It appeals to thought and not belief; to reflection, not to obedience.

A want of knowledge or recognition of this truth has often placed Spiritualists in a position of much pain and some humiliation, and this leads us to the advice which it is the object of this paper to offer them, to investigate thoroughly and continuously, but not to make public their laboratory experiments. The study of the philosophy of Spiritualism requires, as does most study, patient and continuous observation, conducted in a circle harmonious and reliable, and not demanding to have its energies wasted in perpetually devising moral tests. It may even then find at seasons much to perplex and discourage. There is no investigation of new truths possible that is exempted from such liabilities; but it will progress,

and will soon find itself in a position of absolute knowledge, enabling it to smile at pseudo science and all its works. It will readily be perceived that such a course of investigation can rarely, if ever, be satisfactorily pursued in the circles of the public professional medium, however respectable and reliable. It demands the continuous observation and experience of the private and, if possible, the home circle. In this respect the earlier investigators of Spiritualism were, in some respects, more fortunate than are those of to-day; it is, indeed, pitiful to observe how much they were, many of them, in advance of us. Of professional mediums there were then few, and they were resorted to rather to establish preliminary facts than for continuous observation. Of controversy there was little, for there was little discussion. There were few attempts on the part of the blind to lead the blind; and people, if they fell into the ditch at all, had only to get out again, unencumbered and keeping their own counsel. All knowledge, therefore, was derived from individual experience and individual judgment, fortified, if at all, by reliable co-operation. It was, as a rule, much deeper, if the area of it were more circumscribed, than that of to-day.

It is to a recurrence to these simple methods that we would invite the investigators of Spiritualism of the present age, applying to the subject merely a genuine independent love of truth and the simple science of common-sense.

"GHOSTS."

"The University College and Hall Union Debating Society"—a body that might have a simpler title—has voted in favour of the following proposition by 13 to 11—"That a belief in those psychical phenomena, commonly called Ghosts, is entirely in accordance with the dictates of reason, common-sense, and experience." We are not sure whether the phrasing of the resolution, like the name of the Society, would not admit of amendment. We observe that one gentleman produced a dictionary from which he read a long definition. Probably he was moved thereto by the remarkable description of a Ghost as "a psychical phenomenon." However, we have heard them called by worse names than that. It is perhaps a sign of the times that the rising generation in a College consecrated to Science, irradiated by the instruction of Professor Ray Lankester, and wholly undefiled by any form of superstitious belief, not to say by any belief at all in these matters, should have affirmed the existence of Ghosts. Mr. C. E. Cassal, as far as one can judge from the brief report of his speech, seems to have told his audience some home truths. "Go and find it all out for yourselves," he said candidly and incisively; "it is not the duty of those who have given time and thought to the matter to give their experience to every body."

MR. EGLINTON.—We hear that Mr. Eglinton has left Pressburg and has returned to Munich, where he will stay a few days and thence proceed to Berlin, after which his engagements will take him to St. Petersburg and Moscow. While in Hungary he gave very successful séances to Princess Esterhazy, Count Michel Esterhazy, Baron and Baroness Mikos, Princess Odelsalschi, Count Czaráry, Count d'Orsay, Baron Prouay, the Archduke Frederick, Prince Schönburg, and several other distinguished personages.

The current number of the *Argosy* has a paper, "Between Two Worlds," which deals with mesmerism and spirit-communion, subjects that are rapidly becoming the stock-in-trade of the magazine story-teller.

THE LONDON OCCULT LODGE AND ASSOCIATION FOR SPIRITUAL INQUIRY, REGENT HOTEL, 31, MARYLEBONE-ROAD.—On Sunday morning next, at eleven o'clock, Mr. Price will give an address on "Mesmeric Healing."—F. W. READ, Secretary, 79, Upper Gloucester-place, N. W.

SUBSCRIBERS RESIDENT ON THE CONTINENT will greatly oblige if, when they send remittances through the Post-office, they will kindly forward to us, at the same time, a notice that they have done so. We frequently receive "orders" through the Post-office without any intimation as to whom they come from, and do not know, therefore, to whose account to credit them.

"TELEPATHY."

The *Spectator*, (January 29th,) contains a notice of *Phantasms of the Living*, which is amusing as showing how hard the Reviewer found it to deal with the mass of material collected in those two portentous volumes. He confines himself almost entirely to some objection to the use of the term "telepathy" as applied by Messrs. Gurney and Myers. No doubt many cases cited in the volumes are not cases to which that newly coined word at all fitly applies. They are cases of independent vision, of clairvoyance, and not of transmitted impression. When the book—the value and importance of which are undeniable—comes under systematic notice, it will be well to notice the difference between a case of real telepathy, where the feeling of pain is communicated from a distance to a passive subject, and those far more numerous cases where a vision of a distant occurrence is flashed into the passive mind. Mr. Severn, for instance, sailing on Lake Coniston receives a blow on the mouth by the tiller as it swung round. His wife asleep felt the blow as if on her own mouth. That is pure telepathy. But a vision of a distant occurrence flashed into the mind is not fitly described as telepathy. I see, for example, a scene at Land's End, a sudden shipwreck: there is not a soul there who knows me or is in any conceivable rapport with my mind. A sudden glimpse is flashed into my mind and all is blank again. Surely the term telepathy does not fit there. The Reviewer concludes with a hearty admission of the value of the collection, "the most serious attempt hitherto made to record the least explicable of psychical impressions."

CORRESPONDENCE.

[It is better that correspondents should append their names and addresses to communications. In any case, however, these must be supplied to the Editor as a guarantee of good faith.]

The "Mental Disease" of the Society for Psychical Research.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—What mental disease is this which possesses the leading spirits of the Society for Psychical Research? Here again in their *Journal* for February, we have the usual group reporting upon what they call "Mesmeric Experiments," but simply describing their own cleverness in detecting an alleged imposture by a mesmerist. Is the Society for Psychical Research—a Society formed with all the prodigious flourishing of trumpets that attended its origin—merely to proclaim the wonderful fact that there is cheating in the world. *Connu!* We have heard that before. When the Society for Psychical Research sets out to seek a possible psychic phenomenon, and, having, as usual, taken a wrong turning, discovers nothing but a mare's nest, why on earth does it ramp all over the place shrieking out the details as if these redounded to its credit? Does it want to prove that there are no such things as real psychic phenomena? Then the Society for Psychical Research is a futile and absurd organisation. And if there are, it is being managed in a futile and absurd way at present; under the influence of a self-induced hypnotic hallucination which obliges it to behold imposture wheresoever it turns its gaze.

But in truth once more I believe it has doubly blundered. I do not know on what grounds it accuses the mesmerist under discussion, but if he mixes imposture with genuine mesmerism—and better evidence than Mr. Hodgson's would be required to prove this—there is none the less so much genuine mesmerism mixed with his imposture that persons investigating this branch of science would be very foolish to act as the Cambridge committee describes itself as acting.

M. M.

Speaking in Unknown Tongues.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I should like to report to your readers what seems a genuine case of the important psychical phenomenon of a person in trance speaking in an unknown tongue.

On January 11th last I was present in a private circle, sitting for development of psychic gifts, where Mr. J. Hopcroft—a young medium well known to many in London—regularly

attends. There also happened to be present on this occasion a stranger recently come from Jersey—who is an Orientalist well acquainted with Hebrew. In the course of the evening Hopcroft, entranced, spoke in a tongue that, for all the rest of us knew, was gibberish. But the Oriental gentleman present said it was a beautiful prayer for peace in Hebrew, beginning "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, may the supplication of Thy servants be acceptable in Thy sight," &c., &c. The Hebrew was good and well pronounced.

I may add that Mr. Hopcroft has been known to my friends from a lad. He has had to work hard for his living from his young days, and has had no means of educating himself even in his own language.

Hale, Farnham.

F. W. THURSTAN, M.A.

Mr. A. E. Carpenter, of Boston.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—A few weeks ago you published an article entitled "An Unique Manifestation," by Mr. A. E. Carpenter, of Boston, U.S. I have just received a letter from that gentleman, and thinking a portion of it, which refers to Spiritualistic matters in that city, the headquarters of Spiritualism as well as the "hub of the universe," might be of interest to your readers, I transcribe it for publication if you think fit.

"Our mutual friend Denton has passed to the majority in a very sad way, far from friends and home, a loss not only to his family, but to the world. It was a severe blow to me, and I have never become reconciled to it, as I felt he was so much needed in this life. Others have gone on, and the ranks of those that were active workers with me in past years are being thinned, and it does not seem to me that those who come forward to take their places are equal to the noble souls that have gone. I conclude, however, that I am getting to be an old fogey, linked to the past, and not abreast with the ardent workers who have lately stepped to the front.

"This season I opened in Cincinnati, and ran seven weeks. Then Washington D.C. five weeks, and I have been here three weeks, and am likely to remain several weeks yet. Boston is all alive to the Mind Cure, Christian Scientists, Mind Reading, Psychological Research, and such like matters, whilst Spiritualism, as you see by the *Banner*, has its share of attention. Materialisation flourishes, and one can see embodied ghosts in a dozen different places in the city, and mediums new and wonderful are springing up on every hand. I have no time or opportunity to visit these new wonders, but hear of them often, and wonder what will happen next. When I get time I am going to look them up.

"I suppose you have seen the copy of 'LIGHT' in which Mr. Eglinton makes his defence of psychography against the attacks of Mrs. Sidgwick. The testimony he brings forward is overwhelming, and ought to forever settle the question as to the fact of slate-writing. We have now a large number of slate-writing mediums, and it has become a common phase of mediumship. My wife goes on with her work as usual, and her power seems to be in no sense diminished, although her health is very delicate. The interest manifested in my entertainments seems to be as great as ever, and the public mind is keenly alive to the spiritual idea that is becoming more and more understood and appreciated. You would find a marked advancement in these things if you could come amongst us again."

Mr. Carpenter, it will be seen, is a "worker" in the cause. He is an able lecturer, but is best known as a mesmerist, and his public exhibitions of psychical phenomena are of a very interesting and surprising character, so much so as to enable him to continue his experiments in one place nightly for several weeks in succession, the interest never seeming to flag.—I remain, yours faithfully,

Eastbourne.

ROBERT COOPER.

February 7th, 1887.

Training for Old Age.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I should like to express in as few words as possible my extreme interest in the article "A Spiritual Centenarian," which appeared in your issue of January 29th.

I was exceedingly struck with the passage, "That true growth of the spirit which declares itself in outward conceptions of life, of science, and of humanity, that development which proves essentially the predominance of the spiritual over the intellectual faculties; the highest condition to which a human being can reach, from which progress to the most supernal heights may be said to be certain," and to the end of the paragraph, which should be carefully read and noted.

This is a subject which is extremely interesting to me, and "Nizida" seems to have more than the clue to this profound question. If I read rightly between the lines I should imagine

that my views on the matter are not far removed from his own, and so I venture to give them, because I feel sure that so profound a student of human nature will be well able to correct what is imperfect in my theory. Evidently "Nizida" looks upon a long life as a great blessing—that is, a long life spent as the subject of his article, Monsieur Chevreul, has evidently spent his. This is my own idea also—that, of course, a long life is a blessing, if during the course of it one great central idea is pursued, namely, that old age *must* be the crown of youth.

Now it is usual to suppose that old people are not to be held responsible for various weaknesses of habits, tempers, "ways," &c., and that, as a matter of course, their intellectual faculties, even their ordinary reasoning faculties, still more their spiritual gifts, will all decay and fade away into general confusion during the latter years of their life. It is thought by some Occultists that their higher principles depart first, leaving the lower principles, the more strictly animal, only to inhabit the body. This is the case, I grieve to think, with the majority; but I do sincerely hold the view that exactly the opposite should and would take place, were the whole life harmoniously regulated. It appears to me that there is a perfect order in the whole life of man which, if trained and regulated, would make old age a very different thing to what it usually is.

We know that the great and profound axiom, "Know thyself," means everything. To accomplish this self-knowledge a long life is necessary. Unless under very favourable circumstances of home-training in early life in things truly spiritual and occult, the true meaning of "self-knowledge" may only come in middle life. If only then, no time must be lost, because middle life is the most important of all. It is the hour of the great battle between the higher and lower natures. Those who give in at that period to all, or even some of, their small faults and weaknesses, to say the least, will find most assuredly as life goes on that their small faults and weaknesses will master them. The idle man or woman will never after that period alter, neither the passionate, the selfish, the deceitful, nor the false. Every one of these and all other faults, which may even only have been moderate at one time, will in after life, and in old age, grow with fungus-like rapidity and invade the whole nature; and it is on this account that we see such painful examples of old age, with all the frailties of youth, with an added frailty of body, which, far from being a shield to their errors, emblazons them forth, and old age is truly an unlovely and unenviable thing.

Let us suppose, however, the reverse of this state of things, and let a man or woman seriously take themselves to task, and determine that their temperaments and evil tendencies shall not conquer them—that by degrees, one by one, their tendencies towards the animal and lower moral nature, shall be so carefully watched and regulated, that even the tendencies and desires shall die out and the whole nature become attuned to, and happy in, only what pertains to the highest ideal. Suppose, also, that with this training of the moral, that of the intellectual goes on also—exactly to balance—and that co-even with this there is always a steady desire towards the highest spiritual. Suppose, also, that every rational attention is paid to the body, that it should neither be pampered nor neglected, neither forgotten nor remembered too much—in fact that it should be kindly treated and all respect shown to it, as it is the house we have chosen to inhabit during our present incarnation, so that this body is kept in health and peace from bodily ailments. In such case what is to prevent old age from being indeed the true crown of youth?

What can exceed the great occult value of the *experience of life*? Constant observation of and love for mankind and nature, and careful noting of the correspondence in all things, will reveal a great deal to the thoughtful person; so much so, that I think old age can and should end differently to what it usually does. The body, if fairly treated, especially in youth, so that no diseases are engendered from the cumulative results of unwholesome diet or living, will only fade gently away. The intellect, if it has not been violently forced in early youth, will gradually expand. Reason and judgment will grow brighter and surer. The spiritual and intuitional faculties, if they have not been starved by lack of interest and observation on fair mother Nature and all her glorious works, will with use only grow clearer. The astral shades will be traversed by the spirit at night in sleep, when it is not encumbered by the body, so that naturally all *spiritual fear* will die. Old people may be timid as far as their bodies are concerned, because they feel justly that they are outwardly no longer fitted for any circumstances depending on strength or

agility ; but timidity of the spirit they cannot and will not have, because as they are fighting the battle on the lower plane by day, so are they fighting it by night on the upper, *i.e.*, the astral. The correspondence must be and is kept. If the battle is not fought and conquered on one plane it will not be on the other ; so that in old age spiritual fear *will* encompass the spirit as well as nervousness and weakness the body. The astral must be passed, either one way or the other, and it is for us all to choose.

If we choose the right way, and advance to old age with perfect harmony reigning in all our members, there is indeed nothing to prevent us, as "Nizida" says, from advancing certainly to most supernal heights. The astral will be safely passed, the lower principles will fall away, and there may be little left of any evil human nature ; for the visions of true old age will exceed in truth and purity all the uncertain ones of trembling and uncultured youth—and the "self-knowledge" being attained, will elevate the intellect to unknown heights. Such must have been the old age of the prophets Enoch and Elijah—and what has been can be. We could not imagine any thing or any being that has not existed or cannot exist, and my own feeling is strongly that the real aim of all education should be the training for old age—for we make or mar our own heavens, as the occult doctrine teaches us.

In all these views I am leaving out the greatest and most paramount, that of training the psychical and physical powers in man in such a way as to make him more than ordinary humanity, so that under guidance, and with unusual capabilities, he can with his sensuous faculties pass through the dread unknown, "over the threshold," and even during this life have his intellectual faculties so enlightened by his spiritual advancement that he is not as other men are. I am not speaking of these "salt of the earth," but of ordinary men and women who have desires towards the highest which they have the executive powers to attain to. No doubt very many act on these principles, but unfortunately, unless their minds are more enlarged than is usually the case with people unread in spiritual wisdom, they are not alive to their own advantages, and lose much by the way that *must* some time or other be gathered up again. Evidently M. Chevreul kept touch of the present day with the freshness of the truly cultured and ever-expansive mind. Old people, as a rule, retire into their past ; and nothing being considered good but what was in their day, their intellects contract with all the rest of their closing faculties. Of course, in this short paper I am not making note of more than one side of life, the inner, as each person knows best how far he is affected by the sorrows and joys of life. It is these differences that make the experience of life ; and making the best of it all will, I feel certain, bring its own great reward. On this subject I feel "Nizida" knows much.

Bedford Park, Chiswick.

ISABEL DE STEIGER.

"Self-Proving Messages."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I observe with interest that the writer of a leading article in "LIGHT" for February 5th, headed "The Investigation of Rare Phenomena, No. II." takes up the argument that the *actual contents* of the messages given by "slate-writing" frequently indicate their origin in some mind other than the medium's, quite apart from the circumstances under which they were obtained, and from the question whether or no a conjurer could have obtained them under similar circumstances.

I have long been endeavouring to collect these *self-proving* messages (so to term them for shortness' sake), but have found very few, even of messages given under normal circumstances (*i.e.*, by tilts, &c., as opposed to "psychography"), which satisfied reasonable canons of evidence. Writers in "LIGHT" have repeatedly asserted that "hundreds" of such self-proving messages were recorded, but when asked to substantiate these assertions they have altogether failed to do so. And although there has been a standing invitation in "LIGHT" to correspondents who have such messages to communicate, very few responses have been made. During the last two years, in fact, scarcely any progress, which I can discover, has been effected in this very interesting line of proof.

I am, therefore, somewhat surprised to find the writer of the article above referred to asserting afresh—and asserting with regard to "psychographic" messages *alone*—which of course are few in proportion to the number of messages derived from tilts,

planchettes, &c., in what I have called normal ways—that "hundreds of witnesses," consisting of peers, officers, conjurers, men of science, &c. (p. 60), have testified to the reception of self-proving psychographic messages. He mentions :—(A) Messages referring "to some private or important matter connected with the inquirer"; (B) messages in handwriting identical with that of a deceased person ; (C) messages written in languages of which the medium is ignorant, and *answering* questions asked, for instance, in Greek.

I must appeal to the writer of this article to give, say twenty, out of these hundreds of instances. I need hardly point out the most obvious requirements of evidence. For instance, in Class A the actual answers obtained should be quoted, having doubtless been noted at the time, as being of such interest and importance. Unless we have the text of the messages, we have no assurance that they were more than a mere yes or no, or vague statement, such as, "You will soon be out of your present trouble"; "You will attain the object which you are striving for," &c.—answers which cannot at any rate be said to be beyond the resources of fraud. We ought, of course, to have evidence that the visitor's affairs could not easily be known to the medium.

In Class B we ought to have a fac-simile of the message obtained, and of the handwriting of the deceased person ; and we ought to have some evidence showing that it was improbable that the medium could have seen the deceased person's handwriting before the séance.

In Class C we ought to have the text of the question asked—say, in Greek—and of the reply made in Greek. It is here, of course, important that the reply should fit the question ; to avoid the chance that scraps of Greek or other languages may have been written beforehand on a slate which is substituted in the course of the sitting.

The case (also mentioned in the article) where words contained in books "taken at random" are written in "closed slates" would fall more properly under a discussion as to the limits of conjuring ; since this phenomenon has been reproduced by at least one conjurer.

I hope that the writer of the article may think fit to give a good number of instances in reply, citing chapter and verse precisely in each case, and giving some of the best at length. As he asserts that there are at this present time perhaps half-a-dozen persons in Europe and America with whom it is stated that this slate-writing takes place, and as Mr. Eglinton's cases have most of them been recently cited in "LIGHT," it would be well to give prominence in the reply to results obtained through other mediums.

I should be glad further to inquire whether, in the view of Spiritualists, self-proving messages from deceased persons are still given by the simple agencies of table-tilting or automatic writing. I cannot understand the lack of fresh evidence of this kind, if the alleged communications can still be obtained. One would have thought that anyone interested in Spiritualism, either from the religious or from the scientific point of view, would have taken great pains to receive such communications, and to give to the world some portion at least of his results. Many readers of "LIGHT," I think, would be glad to see such results in its columns, and I, personally, am very grateful whenever any evidence of this kind is sent to me. I shall hope gradually to publish all the cases of interest which may be entrusted to me.—I am, sir, yours obediently,

FREDERIC W. H. MYERS.

Leckhampton House, Cambridge.

February 5th, 1887.

"Liberated Spirits."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—“E. M.” would be glad to know what I mean by a "liberated spirit." Surely "E. M." can comprehend that what is true of a thing in one sense may not be true of it absolutely and in every sense. I was speaking about the body and re-incarnation. Did I ever deny that there may be "*spirits* in prison" and in the sorest bondage not yet half redeemed?

Nevertheless, I am uttering the universal voice of mankind—whether Christian or heathen—when I speak of the body as "a prison" and the escape from it as "liberation." Thus Paul exclaims, "Who shall deliver me from the *body* of this death?" or from this deadly body—deadly in a moral sense, *as may be seen* by the context. He had said before, "In me" (that is, in my flesh) "dwelleth no good thing"; also, "I delight in the law of God

after the inward man, but I find another law in my members," &c., &c.

Plato is full of this idea; and Cicero says in the beautiful "Dream of Scipio": "Those only are truly alive who have flown away from the chains of the body, as from a prison; for that which you call life is death." Thus, too, Shakespeare, speaking of the music of the spheres, says:—

"But while this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly hedge us in we cannot hear it."

But I frankly acknowledge that all this does not apply to "E. M." All mankind speak in the same key—always excepting "E. M." He, Ariel as he is, soars to the highest heavens, and never once feels the weight of mortal ligaments. Thrice happy "E. M."!

The Anglican Church, in her offices, speaks of "laying aside the burden of the flesh"; it speaks of the dead as "delivered from their fleshly prisons." Nay, even Kardec thus writes in his *Levres des Esprits*:—

"Does the incarnated spirit reside willingly in his corporeal envelope? You might as well ask whether a prisoner willingly remains locked up in prison?" Again, "The exercise of spiritual faculties is weakened by the grossness of matter."

So enamoured of materiality is "E. M." that his one and only remedy for "earthward tendencies" is to make it return to the earth for countless lives, and to plunge it back into matter, and to re-immense it and saturate it with material conditions. Strange remedy!

"E. M." illustrates his meaning by the case of law-breakers who are sent back again and again to prison; but he misunderstands the whole matter. The object of this re-consignment to bondage is not the moral improvement of the prisoner. The primary object of his punishment is not his own good, but to deter others. The secondary object is to prevent him from further outrages on society; the object is to save society, not himself. His moral improvement is left to take care of itself, or, at all events, it is wholly subordinate to the other objects I have named. Swedenborg profoundly states that the soul can only be reformed in a state of liberty; there must be an elastic play of the faculties. A prisoner wants all this, and his reform is in most cases very improbable. The other instances cited by "E. M." are too frivolous to deserve mention. The region of free existence—that is, spirit life—is the true sphere of moral reformation.

Let us hope that English Spiritualism is not going to don the cast-off clothes of France. I oftentimes wondered at the apparently unresisted sway of Kardec. But the ice is at last broken, and the waters again flow. We now see that beneath the seeming acquiescence there was an immense amount of indignation and disgust; and no wonder, when we consider the pretended knowledge, the affected precision, the autocratic dictation, the measureless assumptions, and, above all, the gloomy and disheartening vista of interminable re-consignments to a fleshly bondage which it offered to suffering humanity. The pent up forces have at length broken loose, and with the silence and almost the suddenness of an earthquake it has hurled the system of Kardec into the air. His followers at once found themselves in a minority and abdicated, to comfort themselves, as best they may, with "the glorious name under which they had fought for thirty years." Lady Caithness, who is a deeply dyed Re-incarnationist, has taken up the running, and is editing a new periodical, with the very pretty name of *L'Aurore*. Can anything be more graceful? But in spite of the prettiness of the name, and her undoubted abilities, it is safe to predict that where Kardec failed she is not likely to succeed.

Llandudno, February 6th.

G. D. HAUGHTON.

The Late Psychological Press.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—As your paragraph with reference to the late Psychological Press may otherwise cause unnecessary misapprehension, permit me to say a word in explanation.

For many months past, owing to the increasingly onerous pressure of duties in connection with "LIGHT" on my time and strength, and, during the six weeks just elapsed, in consequence of failing health and other causes, I have been utterly unable to give my personal attention to the book department. I regret that any cause for complaint has existed, and can only say that if any person who has not received full satisfaction will communicate with me personally, addressing his or her letter to the care of Mr. E. W. Allen, 4, Ave Maria-lane, London, E.C., I

will do my utmost to adjust matters. The Psychological Press Agency, though a private undertaking in one sense, and having, as you say, no connection with "LIGHT," has never, I may explain, been worked for personal profit, and although equal care, accuracy, and attention (which in this particular case had to be denied it owing to the prior claims of other honorary work) are requisite for its conduct, it cannot, therefore, in a strict sense, be regarded as having been a private business.

As regards the long announced edition of Dupotet's *Magic Unveiled*, this work, though partly in type, was laid aside some months ago pending leisure on my part to complete it. This leisure I can now find, and the book will be proceeded with as early as circumstances will permit. In the meantime, I shall be happy to return the subscription to any of the very few subscribers who have paid if they so desire.—Yours truly,

4, Ave Maria-lane, E.C.

JOHN S. FARMER.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- A. E.-E.—Are sorry to be obliged to postpone the insertion of your letter till next week.
G. Z. (Odessa).—Subscription received, for which accept thanks.
F. R.—Thanks for your contribution, but we think it is scarcely suitable for our columns.
C.—Your verses, you must excuse us for saying, are hardly good enough for publication.
W. G.—Many thanks for your very interesting letter. Your experience must have been very gratifying. We are not surprised that it has afforded you comfort and consolation.

A REMARKABLE STORY.—The following singular incident connected with the loss of the *Kapunda* is reported. Louisa Benn, a young girl living with her mother in Queen-street, Wednesbury, had, much against the wish of her friends, decided to go to Australia, and had joined the *Kapunda* at Plymouth. Meanwhile her mother had suffered most distressing fears and forebodings. She had in imagination continually seen the *Kapunda* strike a huge rock in mid-ocean and sink, and had heard shrieks of despairing men and women. Life under these circumstances became almost insupportable. A few hours before the *Kapunda* sailed, fancying she heard her daughter shrieking, "Oh, mother," she telegraphed for the girl's return. The latter was on board, and the doctor advised her to remain, but taking the advice of another officer she left the ship, abandoning her baggage, and reluctantly returned home. Until news of the disaster arrived she bitterly lamented she had not proceeded on her voyage, but now her remarkable escape is matter for thankfulness.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—This Society has recently succeeded in securing premises for their permanent use. They have taken the Cordwainers' Hall, in Nelson-street, close to Earl Grey's Monument, and, therefore, in a central position. The hall is not quite so large as the one they have been using temporarily, but it is compact, airy, and well lighted, has a good entrance and exterior appearance, and, therefore, should be of greater service to the Society in their efforts for the promulgation of the truths of Spiritualism than their former premises in Weir's-court, which rather tended to repel the general public by its situation instead of attracting. The Society will now be able to carry on their work throughout the week. The inability to do this fully has been found to be a great drawback on their usefulness in the past year. The inauguration of the new hall (although opened a Sunday previously) is to be by that eloquent and gifted exponent of our movement, Mrs. Hardinge-Britten, who is announced to lecture in it as follows:—On Sunday, February 20th, at 10.30 a.m., on "Religion: Whence, what, and whitherward?" at 6.30 p.m. (by desire), on "Religion and Evolution in the Light of Pulpit Utterances." On Tuesday, February 22nd, at 7.30 p.m., on "The Destroyer and Saviour of Mankind," followed by answers to relevant questions from the audience. On Wednesday, February 23rd, at 7.30 p.m., a lecture, illustrated by limelight dissolving views, upon "The Sun, or what do we know about the Sun?" On Sunday, February 27th, at 10.30 a.m., on "The Demand of the Hour on Humanity"; at 6.30 p.m., Six Relevant Questions, chosen by audience. And on Monday, February 28th, at 7.30 p.m., on "New Zealand: the Paradise of the Southern Seas." This lecture will also be very fully illustrated by limelight dissolving views, several of which have been specially prepared for the purpose from pictures taken on the spot. On Wednesday, March 2nd, Mrs. Britten will open a sale of work in the same hall at 2 p.m. This will continue open for two days, and is for the purpose of raising funds for the Society's requirements. The sale will be under the management of the lady members of the Society. Refreshments will be provided, and the proceedings will be enlivened by vocal and instrumental music at intervals. Many kind friends, we are informed, have contributed articles to the sale of work, amongst whom are Mrs. Hardinge-Britten and Dr. Wm. Britten, Mrs. Gilbert Wilkinson, of Manchester, and W. P. Adshead, Esq., of Belper. We wish the Society every success in its new venture, and from the ample programme above given, if carried out with the energy displayed in former times, we feel assured that a period of active usefulness lies before it.—CORRESPONDENT.

WHAT IS SAID OF PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

PROFESSORS TORNEBOM AND EDLAND, THE SWEDISH PHYSICISTS.—“Only those deny the reality of spirit phenomena who have never examined them, but profound study alone can explain them. We do not know where we may be led by the discovery of the cause of these, as it seems, trivial occurrences, or to what new spheres of Nature's kingdom they may open the way; but that they will bring forward important results is already made clear to us by the revelations of natural history in all ages.”—*Aftonblad* (Stockholm), October 30th, 1879.

BARON CARL DU PREL (Munich) in *Nord und Sud*.—“One thing is clear; that is, that psychography must be ascribed to a transcendental origin. We shall find: (1) That the hypothesis of prepared slates is inadmissible. (2) The place on which the writing is found is quite inaccessible to the hands of the medium. In some cases the double slate is securely locked, leaving only room inside or the tiny morsel of slate-pencil. (3) That the writing is actually done at the time. (4) That the medium is not writing. (5) The writing must be actually done with the morsel of slate or lead-pencil. (6) The writing is done by an intelligent being, since the answers are exactly pertinent to the questions. (7) This being can read, write, and understand the language of human beings, frequently such as is unknown to the medium. (8) It strongly resembles a human being, as well in the degree of its intelligence as in the mistakes sometimes made. These beings are therefore, although invisible, of human nature or species. It is no use whatever to fight against this proposition. (9) If these beings speak, they do so in human language. (10) If they are asked who they are, they answer that they are beings who have left this world. (11) When these appearances become partly visible, perhaps only their hands, the hands seen are of human form. (12) When these things become entirely visible, they show the human form and countenance. . . . Spiritualism must be investigated by science. I should look upon myself as a coward if I did not openly express my convictions.”

J. H. FICHTE, THE GERMAN PHILOSOPHER AND AUTHOR.—“Notwithstanding my age (83) and my exemption from the controversies of the day, I feel it my duty to bear testimony to the great fact of Spiritualism. No one should keep silent.”

PROFESSOR DE MORGAN, PRESIDENT OF THE MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.—“I am perfectly convinced that I have both seen and heard, in a manner which should make unbelief impossible, things called spiritual, which cannot be taken by a rational being to be capable of explanation by imposture, coincidence, or mistake. So far I feel the ground firm under me.”

DR. ROBERT CHAMBERS.—“I have for many years known that these phenomena are real, as distinguished from impostures; and it is not of yesterday that I concluded they were calculated to explain much that has been doubtful in the past; and, when fully accepted, revolutionise the whole frame of human opinion on many important matters.”—*Extract from a Letter to A. Russel Wallace*.

PROFESSOR HARE, EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.—“Far from abating my confidence in the inferences respecting the agencies of the spirits of deceased mortals, in the manifestations of which I have given an account in my work, I have, within the last nine months” (this was written in 1858), “had more striking evidences of that agency than those given in the work in question.”

PROFESSOR CHALLIS, THE LATE PLUMERIAN PROFESSOR OF ASTRONOMY AT CAMBRIDGE.—“I have been unable to resist the large amount of testimony to such facts, which has come from many independent sources, and from a vast number of witnesses. . . . In short, the testimony has been so abundant and contemporaneous, that either the facts must be admitted to be such as are reported, or the possibility of certifying facts by human testimony must be given up.”—*Clerical Journal*, June, 1862.

PROFESSOR GREGORY, F.R.S.E.—“The essential question is this. What are the proofs of the agency of departed spirits? Although I cannot say that I yet feel the sure and firm conviction on this point which I feel on some others, I am bound to say that the higher phenomena, recorded by so many truthful and honourable men, appear to me to render the spiritual hypothesis almost certain. . . . I believe that if I could myself see the higher phenomena alluded to I should be satisfied, as are all those who have had the best means of judging of the truth of the spiritual theory.”

LORD BROUGHAM.—“There is but one question I would ask the author. Is the Spiritualism of this work foreign to our materialistic, manufacturing age? No; for amidst the varieties of mind which divers circumstances produce are found those who cultivate man's highest faculties; to these the author addresses himself. But even in the most cloudless skies of scepticism I see a rain-cloud, if it be no bigger than a man's hand; it is modern Spiritualism.”—*Preface by Lord Brougham to "The Book of Nature."* By C. O. Groom Napier, F.C.S.

THE LONDON DIALECTICAL COMMITTEE reported: “1. That sounds of a very varied character, apparently proceeding from articles of furniture, the floor and walls of the room—the vibrations accompanying which sounds are often distinctly perceptible to the touch—occur, without being produced by muscular action or mechanical contrivance. 2. That movements of heavy bodies take place without mechanical contrivance of any kind, or adequate exertion of muscular force by those present, and frequently without contact or connection with any person. 3. That these sounds and movements often occur at the time and in the manner asked for by persons present, and, by means of a simple code of signals answer questions and spell out coherent communications.”

CAMILLE FLAMMARION, THE FRENCH ASTRONOMER, AND MEMBER OF THE ACADEMIE FRANCAISE.—“I do not hesitate to affirm my conviction, based on personal examination of the subject, that any scientific man who declares the phenomena denominated ‘magnetic,’ ‘somnambulic,’ ‘mediumic,’ and others not yet explained by science to be ‘impossible,’ is one who speaks without knowing what he is talking about; and also any man accustomed, by his professional avocations, to scientific observation—provided that his mind be not biased by pre-conceived opinions, nor his mental vision blinded by that opposite kind of illusion, unhappily too common in the learned world, which consists in imagining that the laws of Nature are already known to us, and that everything which appears to overstep the limit of our present formulas is impossible—may acquire a radical and absolute certainty of the reality of the facts alluded to.”

CROMWELL F. VARLEY, F.R.S.—“Twenty-five years ago I was a hard-headed unbeliever. Spiritual phenomena, however, suddenly and quite unexpectedly, were soon after developed in my own family. . . . This led me to inquire and to try numerous experiments in such a way as to preclude, as much as circumstances would permit, the possibility of trickery and self-deception. . . . He then details various phases of the phenomena which had come within the range of his personal experience, and continues: “Other and numerous phenomena have occurred, proving the existence (a) of forces unknown to science; (b) the power of instantly reading my thoughts; (c) the presence of some intelligence or intelligences controlling those powers. . . . That the phenomena occur there is overwhelming evidence, and it is too late now to deny their existence.”

ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE, F.G.S.—“My position, therefore, is that the phenomena of Spiritualism in their entirety do not require further confirmation. They are proved, quite as well as any facts are proved in other sciences, and it is not denial or quibbling that can disprove any of them, but only fresh facts and accurate deductions from those facts. When the opponents of Spiritualism can give a record of their researches approaching in duration and completeness to those of its advocates; and when they can discover and show in detail, either how the phenomena are produced or how the many sane and able men here referred to have been deluded into a coincident belief that they have witnessed them; and when they can prove the correctness of their theory by producing a like belief in a body of equally sane and able unbelievers—then, and not till then, will it be necessary for Spiritualists to produce fresh confirmation of facts which are, and always have been, sufficiently real and indisputable to satisfy any honest and persevering inquirer.”—*Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*.

DR. LOCKHART ROBERTSON.—“The writer” (i.e., Dr. L. Robertson) “can now no more doubt the physical manifestations of so-called Spiritualism than he would any other fact, as for example, the fall of the apple to the ground, of which his senses informed him. As stated above, there was no place or chance of anylegerdemain, or fraud, in these physical manifestations. He is aware, even from recent experience of the impossibility of convincing anyone, by a

mere narrative of events apparently so out of harmony with all our knowledge of the laws which govern the physical world, and he places these facts on record rather as an act of justice due to those whose similar statements he had elsewhere doubted and denied, than with either the desire or hope of convincing others. Yet he cannot doubt the ultimate recognition of facts of the truth of which he is so thoroughly convinced. Admit these physical manifestations, and a strange and wide world of research is opened to our inquiry. This field is new to the materialist mind of the last two centuries, which, even in the writings of divines of the English Church, doubts and denies all spiritual manifestations and agencies, be they good or evil.”—From a letter by Dr. Lockhart Robertson, published in the *Dialectical Society's Report on Spiritualism*, p. 24.

NASSAU WILLIAM SENIOR.—“No one can doubt that phenomena like these (Phrenology, Homeopathy, and Mesmerism) deserve to be observed, recorded, and arranged; and whether we call by the name of mesmerism, or by any other name, the science which proposes to do this, is a mere question of nomenclature. Among those who profess this science there may be careless observers, prejudiced recorders, and rash systematisers; their errors and defects may impede the progress of knowledge, but they will not stop it. And we have no doubt that, before the end of this century, the wonders which perplex almost equally those who accept and those who reject modern mesmerism will be distributed into defined classes, and found subject to ascertained laws—in other words, will become the subjects of a science.” These views will prepare us for the following statement, made in the *Spiritual Magazine*, 1864, p. 336: “We have only to add, as a further tribute to the attainments and honours of Mr. Senior, that he was by long inquiry and experience a firm believer in spiritual power and manifestations. Mr. Home was his frequent guest, and Mr. Senior made no secret of his belief among his friends. He it was who recommended the publication of Mr. Home's recent work by Messrs. Longmans, and he authorised the publication, under initials, of one of the striking incidents there given, which happened to a dear and near member of his family.”

CONJURERS AND PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

Mediums who are the instruments of an external agency, have more than once been confronted with conjurers who deceive by sleight of hand; and in the same manner that no man of science who has thoroughly and fairly investigated the phenomena has failed to become convinced of their reality, so no conjurer who has been confronted with the same facts has been able to explain their occurrence by prestidigitation. Houdin, Jacobs, Bellachini, Hermann, Kellar, and others have already confessed their powerlessness to produce under the same conditions what occurs without human intervention in the presence of a medium. We give the testimony of one of them:—

HARRY KELLAR, a distinguished professor of legerdemain, investigated the slate-writing phenomena which occurred in the presence of Mr. Eglinton, at Calcutta, regarding which he said:—

“In conclusion, let me state that after a most stringent trial and strict scrutiny of these wonderful experiences I can arrive at no other conclusion than that there was no trace of trickery in any form; nor was there in the room any mechanism or machinery by which could be produced the phenomena which had taken place. The ordinary mode by which Maskelyne and other conjurers imitate levitation or the floating test could not possibly be done in the room in which we were assembled.”

ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

The Conduct of Circles.—By “M.A. (Oxon.)”

If you wish to see whether Spiritualism is really only jugglery and imposture, try it by personal experiment.

If you can get an introduction to some experienced Spiritualist on whose good faith you can rely, ask him for advice; and, if he is holding private circles, seek permission to attend one to see how to conduct sances, and what to expect.

There is, however, difficulty in obtaining access to private circles, and, in any case, you must rely chiefly on experiences in your own family circle, or amongst your own friends, all strangers being excluded. The bulk of Spiritualists have gained conviction thus.

Form a circle of from four to eight persons, half, or at least two, of negative, passive temperament and preferably of the female sex, the rest of a more positive type.

Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance, in subdued light, and in comfortable and unconstrained positions, round an uncovered table of convenient size. Place the palms of the hands flat upon its upper surface. The hands of each sitter need not touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

Do not concentrate attention too fixedly on the expected manifestations. Engage in cheerful but not frivolous conversation. Avoid dispute or argument. Scepticism has no deterrent effect, but a bitter spirit of opposition in a person of determined will may totally stop or decidedly impede manifestations. If conversation flags, music is a great help, if it be agreeable to all, and not of a kind to irritate the sensitive ear. Patience is essential, and it may be necessary to meet ten or twelve times at short intervals, before anything occurs. If after such a trial you still fail, form a fresh circle. Guess at the reason of your failure, eliminate the inharmonious elements, and introduce others. An hour should be the limit of an unsuccessful sance.

The first indications of success usually are a cold breeze passing over the hands, with involuntary twitchings of the hands and arms of some of the sitters, and a sensation of throbbing in the table. These indications, at first so slight as to cause doubt as to their reality will usually develop with more or less rapidity.

If the table moves, let your pressure be so gentle on its surface that you are sure you are not aiding its motions. After some time you will probably find that the movement will continue if your hands are held over, but not in contact with it. Do not, however, try this until the movement is assured, and be in no hurry to get messages.

When you think that the time has come, let some one take command of the circle and act as spokesman. Explain to the unseen Intelligence that an agreed code of signals is desirable, and ask that a tilt may be given as the alphabet is slowly repeated at the several letters which form the word that the Intelligence wishes to spell. It is convenient to use a single tilt for No, three for Yes, and two to express doubt or uncertainty.

When a satisfactory communication has been established, ask if you are rightly placed, and if not, what order you should take. After this ask who the Intelligence purports to be, which of the company is the medium, and such relevant questions. If confusion occurs, ascribe it to the difficulty that exists in directing the movements at first with exactitude. Patience will remedy this, if there be a real desire on the part of the Intelligence to speak with you. If you only satisfy yourself at first that it is possible to speak with an Intelligence separate from that of any person present, you will have gained much.

The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals, and ask as the raps become clear that they may be made on the table, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means, but avoid any vexatious imposition of restrictions on free communication. Let the Intelligence use its own means; if the attempt to communicate deserves your attention, it probably has something to say to you, and will resent being hampered by useless interference. It resents greatly with the sitters to make the manifestations elevating or frivolous and even tricky.

Should an attempt be made to entrance the medium, or to manifest by any violent methods, or by means of form manifestations, ask that the attempt may be deferred till you can secure the presence of some experienced Spiritualist. If this request is not heeded, discontinue the sitting. The process of developing a trance-medium is one that might disconcert an inexperienced inquirer. Increased light will check noisy manifestations.

Lastly, try the results you get by the light of Reason. Maintain a level head and a clear judgment. Do not believe everything you are told, for though the great unseen world contains many a wise and discerning spirit, it also has in it the accumulation of human folly, vanity, and error; and this lies nearer to the surface than that which is wise and good. Distrust the free use of great names. Never for a moment abandon the use of your reason. Do not enter into a very solemn investigation in a spirit of idle curiosity or frivolity. Cultivate a reverent desire for what is pure, good and true. You will be repaid if you gain only a well-grounded conviction that there is a life after death, for which a pure and good life before death is the best and wisest preparation.

THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

16, CRAVEN STREET, CHARING CROSS, S.W.

This Society of Spiritualists, founded for the purpose, primarily, of uniting those who share a common faith, and then of giving information respecting that faith to those who seek for it, has now occupied Chambers at the above address. There will be found an extensive Library of works especially attractive to Spiritualists; the various Journals of Spiritualism published in this and other countries; and opportunities of converse with friends likeminded. The Alliance holds periodical Soirées at the Banqueting Hall, St. James's Hall, where papers on interesting phases of the subject are read, and discussion is invited. Members of the Alliance are eligible for joining its Research section. Donations solicited.

[One or more Members of Council attend on Tuesday evenings in each week, from Five to Seven (excepting on the Second Tuesday in each Month, when the hour is from Six to Seven) to receive friends and answer inquiries.]

Minimum Annual Subscription of Members and Associates, One Guinea, payable in advance, and on the 1st January in each year. Further particulars may be obtained from B. D. GODFREY, Librarian, on the premises, or of

MORELL THEOBALD, Hon. Sec.

62, Granville Park, Blackheath, S.E.

ADDRESSES DELIVERED BEFORE

THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE AT ST. JAMES'S HALL.

Voices in the Air: Being the President's
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